

# **REINCARNATION**

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## *THE WAR SITUATION TO-DAY*

We hold that ideas rule the world, as Plato long ago averred. But thoughts emitted are objective things and are subject to the laws of their level of existence. Hence we may well consider the status of European affairs at the present time from the point of view of the unexhausted and the exhausted forces of thought.

Obviously the people of the Teutonic powers have maintained two lines of thought in their midst—the one all in favor of the Prussian mode of dominance, the other opposed to the methods of the small, aggressive, and, in the stricter sense, non-German dwellers on the bleak and forbidding southern shores of the Baltic Sea, who have succeeded under the Hohenzollerns in

forcing their will upon the Germans, the Austrians, the Hungarians and other peoples. The amount and potency of these thoughts and items of will-effort set opposite each other, plus future increments, represent in balance the direction in which the Teutonic peoples will move. We cannot but believe that there is a great unexhausted balance of force ready to be used at the proper moment on the side of those within the Teutonic countries who have been opposed to those principles of Prussian war-making and war-practice which have shocked the civilized world. Furthermore this force can be utilized at the opportune moment to the casting of a balance in favor of the world's good.

Much the same thing may be said for Russia. At the moment the socialist party of the common people, largely under the influence of German propaganda, occupy the center of the stage. But the powerful and ancient forces of noble aspirations for national existence and unity are not exhausted—seem, indeed, scarcely to have been touched.

We believe, therefore, that Russia may retrieve herself suddenly in the near future and that similarly an internal revulsion of feeling within the Teutonic countries may bring a comparatively early ending of the war.

W. V-H.

*"THAT REMINDS ME"*

A certain type of actor amuses his audience by attempting to hang his hat on a hat-rack painted on the scenery, the result being, of course, that his hat, obedient to the rules of reality and not of shams, falls and rolls across the stage. Many people do the same with their thoughts. They hang them on unrealities; whereby they find the dusty floor of oblivion. Hats and thoughts deserve better treatment; yet almost any peg will serve to hang them on, provided the peg be not false.

Prompted by this simple law I would venture to point my readers to a few sound albeit strangely carven pegs—for may not a writer exercise in some degree the duties of host? Let us select for this purpose two statements recently made to me:

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An English lady, well-to-do and possessing a mansion and park among the grassy downs of Wiltshire was visited by a younger lady whose home lay amid the lakes of Westmoreland. The latter had never before resided in central England, nor had she any knowledge of her friend's environments. During her visit the elder lady took her for a long drive to see a quaint old Manor house belonging to a friend; and although the younger lady had not knowingly heard previously of this Manor House she recognized the house afar off, and caused her friend no little astonishment by telling her about those portions of its exterior and gardens which could not yet be seen.

They were ushered into the large hall by a

man servant and the younger lady became a little confused herself, for she could not avoid a sense of wonderment that a house which she had never wittingly entered before should seem so familiar. She could hardly suppress her exclamations when they entered into the drawing room so novel and yet so well known to her; but thinking it might be unwelcome to her hostess she repressed herself until the servant had left when she whispered to her friend, "It is very strange, but I know this house so well. I have often been here before. I not only know every nook and cranny but I remember that there is a curious carved ivory box kept in the mahogany cabinet in the corner." Her friend said, "Nonsense, you are always imagining things." So the younger lady, partly to satisfy herself and partly to convince her friend, walked across the room and opened the cabinet door. Truly enough there was the box—a very old piece of ivorywork.

She had hardly shut the door of the cabinet and regained her chair when the hostess entered and after some few minutes passed in talking, tea was brought in by a neat English parlor-maid who was much too intent on her duties to notice the visitors at first. Nothing extraordinary happened until the maid came to hand the younger lady the cream and sugar when she dropped the tray bearing these details of afternoon tea and shouted out, "Oh, Mum, it's my ghost lady, it's my ghost lady," and therewith rushed out of the room in unaffected dismay. The hostess endeavoured to explain to the young lady that this maid had told her that for some time past she had constantly seen a lady in the room, sometimes in

the evening but generally early in the morning when she was tidying up. The young lady then mentioned to the hostess her intimate knowledge of the house and the incident of opening the cabinet door and finding the box. She was even able to describe to her how the rooms were arranged in other parts of the house and they came to the conclusion that she must have visited the place in her sleep. On parting her hostess said, "Dear, since you have visited us so often in your sleep, do not forget to do likewise in your waking hours."

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An English naval officer, eminently practical and knowing as little about clairvoyance as, for example, a Von Tirpitz would of conscience, was in search of a suitable residence in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth. In the course of this task he entered a vacant house and having examined it thoroughly was about to leave when he saw a friend of his, another officer of the Navy, come in at the front door, and, unaware of his presence, pass into one of the reception rooms. Naturally the first one followed and was still further surprised to see a young lady leaning on the mantelpiece, apparently awaiting her lover—for he recognized her at once as the fiancée of the friend who had just entered the house. This friend walked up to the fire and spoke to her. Some quarrel seemed to ensue; which was abruptly ended by the man drawing from his pocket a short dagger which he plunged into her heart. As the girl fell in a heap by the empty fireplace, her lover and slayer knelt down at her side; and

as he did so the whole scene vanished and the astounded watcher found himself surveying an absolutely empty room. Nor did the dust on the mantelpiece nor the dust on the floor show any proof or physical traces of the materialization of his vivid vision.

Leaving the house dazed and full of wonderment, he determined to dismiss the whole scene as some inexplicable creation of his own brain. In this resolve he would doubtless have succeeded but that a few days afterwards he heard that the young couple who had enacted this fatal drama in the vacant house had just taken a lease of that identical house as their future residence and that he—the unwilling and perturbed witness of the tragedy apparently rehearsed therein—now found himself bidden as a guest to their wedding.

And merrily rang those wedding bells and gladly and happily the young folk passed to their new abode, where the dust gave place to dainty decorations and cosy fires burned brightly in the grate—at whose side the vision showed its young mistress falling with the dagger in her heart.

There ends the story, for the girl and her husband are each nobly and bravely fulfilling their parts in the Great War—and the future has not rent its veil. Nor could he who saw the vision wisely speak—only the gods know and may fulfill their decrees.

Yet here are mental pegs upon which the reader may hang thoughts.

*Julian B. Arnold.*

## ATTITUDE AND KARMA

One of the most precious jewels among the teachings of soul wisdom is that whatever happens to a man from the world outside does not really matter, but that the attitude which the man maintains toward life and events is of the most profound importance. The explanation given is that whatever happens to a man is the result of his own actions, feelings and thoughts in the past: it is something which can not be helped and which shou'd therefore not be grieved over. But the way in which we take things that come to us and the way we feel and think about what happens to us, is of incalculable importance, for it is our very life and will help directly to determine what our future lives will be.

However, it is necessary to understand these points very carefully, otherwise we may easily draw some erroneous conclusions from them and fall into an attitude which may be very unwise and engage in conduct which may lead us into unnecessary difficulties. Such questions as these, involving our attitude and our karma, are necessarily very complicated in actual concrete life, even though the underlying principles may be quite clear, simple and easily recognised.

In the first place we must not forget that we ourselves are continually taking part in the making of new karma and in the modifying of old karma. Thus the future is very largely in our own hands, and we are, to a very large extent, the makers and shapers of our own destiny, our future karma. More than this, we can influence and sometimes modify the old karma which is

just in the process of discharging itself upon us. We must remember that karma is nothing but a mass of energies of various kinds,—physical, emotional and mental,—which we have sometime in the past sent out from the bodies of our personality—physical, astral and mental—and which must return to us and affect us, usually by entering into our bodies, in order to complete their cyclic courses in nature. For, having appropriated energies which belong to nature's stores, and having made use of them by letting them flow through our own bodies, thereby producing certain actions, we must expect that the disturbed balance of nature must at some future time be restored by letting these energies again flow through our bodies in the opposite direction. Now, as long as the particular karma which is coming back to us is not quite used up, we can modify it by meeting it with some new energy. Thus, while we can not destroy or avoid the old karma which must come back to us, we can yet change its nature, sometimes, or weaken its strength. This process may be illustrated by an example. Suppose a certain karma of hate is returning to us. We can meet it with love and thus neutralise much of the amount which was to have affected us. Or, as is very common, when certain undesirable physical events are impending over us, we can work hard to counteract them and sometimes succeed in turning them aside or in lessening the intensity of their effects upon us as they strike us.

Very appropriate in this connection is that very wonderful one of the Golden Verses of Pythagoras which admonishes us, "Bear with patience

your lot, and do not repine over it; but endeavor to do what you can to improve it." This verse tells us exactly, in the fewest words, with what attitude we should meet our karma. When a calamity has fallen upon us, it is then too late to change it or avoid it: therefore it is quite a useless waste of energy to grieve over it. And while unpleasant events are meeting us, it is also quite unwise to feel unhappy; and in this case we should not feel helpless because we are still able to endeavor to do what we can to change them for the better.

It would seem as though a correct understanding of this question would naturally lead one to develop a curious kind of feeling of detachment from the activities around us and even from the activities of our own bodies. This is exactly what that great treatise on attitude in life, the *Bhagavad Gita*, plainly and clearly advises us to develop. We are to regard our outer life as an interested spectator would gaze at a drama acted out upon a stage. And when we ourselves are obliged to enter into action we may still keep up this attitude of detachment: we know that events are working themselves out around us and upon us, but in our inner life we remain calm and unmoved, busily engaged in extracting from our experiences in life those deeper lessons and hidden meanings which have to do with the causes of actions and our own evolving.

Thus we really do well to adopt a certain indifference to the life of the world,—not at all what the world would understand by indifference, but the kind of indifference which would mean that we understood something of the nature of the

workings of karmic law and of our own share in shaping and modifying karma. We would not necessarily seem to be indifferent outwardly, and we might even act very much like other people would act under similar circumstances; but we would act with a greater and a truer appreciation of the meaning of life and the events which make up karma. Outwardly we might act as though much perturbed and affected by actions, but inwardly we would remain serene and unmoved, that the great and most important reality is that measure of control over the actions of the personality and direct its courses of action with a greater wisdom, power and skill.

And this inner indifference is exactly what should constitute our attitude toward life. We should not really regard the events of physical life or the life of the higher bodies of the personality with indifference, for they all have a deep meaning and purpose. But their deep meaning and purpose do not apply to the events of ordinary life in themselves, but to their relations to the greater and invisible realities of the scheme of evolution. In other words, we should realise that the great and most important reality is that of the Will of the Supreme,—that all life shall evolve and develop self-consciousness and divine qualities. The events which we experience in the outer world, the life of the personality, are merely a part of the workings of the vast mechanism by which the real evolution is made possible.

Thus wealth is not desirable in itself, any more than is poverty. Both mean for the ego valuable experience of life. Only poverty is rather a condition of absence of powers to help in the un-

folding of the great plan of evolution, while wealth gives us certain powers in the physical world to accomplish useful changes in the conditions under which evolution takes place. It is not the Will of the Supreme that humanity shall suffer, but that humanity shall evolve. For this it seems at this time that much suffering is necessary. The great war is a striking piece of evidence to this effect. But men must learn to avoid conduct which must inevitably lead to suffering and difficulty. That is a necessary part of evolution itself. Let us fight hard to combat evil, but let us do so with wisdom and with universal love in our hearts. If our attitude is right, then our karma will take care of itself and will after due time cease to affect us.

We can hardly overestimate the importance of maintaining the best possible attitude towards all things. It seems to be really the mainspring of our life. Is it not our attitude which determines what our motives are to be,—the motives which bring about our outward actions? For the highly potent energies of will must act through our own bodily mechanism, if they are to act at all, and our attitude controls our bodies to a very considerable extent, especially as to what qualities of life are to be expressed through them.

In a real and deep sense we *are* our attitude, for it is our mode of being and living. Therefore it is well for us to idealise our attitude and try to reach the ideal which we hold over ourselves. And as our karmic limitations are overcome we shall find ourselves realising the ideal attitude, even in the outer life of the world.

C. S.

*THE IDEALITY OF MAZZINI ALIVE  
IN THE SOULS OF MEN TO-DAY*

Time marches on slowly, resolutely. Yet the touch of great men leave their mark upon him, and after many years the ideals conceived in their mighty souls commence to take birth once more in the hearts of lesser men and a new day begins to dawn. Such men as Mazzini are never fully appreciated in their day, for their ideals are always brought into deadly conflict with the Powers of Darkness in high places, and in the unequal struggle those pure and simple ideals are usually obscured by the haze of the apparent impracticability. But their impracticability is only apparent, and the inequality of the conflict is only apparent, for "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again," and even though the ideals of great men may seem to die with them, the resurrection is sure. Sooner or later, with great pain and travail, those same ideals again find birth in the souls of great men and are taken and nursed at the powerful breast of the masses.

Three years ago, statesmen would have repudiated without argument such an idea as that the moral ideals applicable to the individual can be applied to the state. And even yet patriotism is regarded by some as unquestioning obedience to the powers that be, in the interests of the fatherland, even though such interests mean the throttling of some innocent yet helpless neighbor. When such men as the Hon. Ruffini, minister of public education, Italy, heralds anew to the world such words as are herein translated, truly we may begin to look for the dawning of a new day.

To an Italian, as to an American heart, then, such a universality of the new moral faith as has already been confirmed by the words concerning Italians, in the powerful book by Theodore Roosevelt, "Fear God and take your own part," must appear in all its beauty and strength of harmony:

"It would have been safe and easy for Italy to have remained neutral, and for such neutrality she would have been bribed by the Central Powers with heavy concessions. But the Italian people refused to yield themselves to the base advice of the mere materialist. In the highest and finest spirit they went to war for a lofty ideal, with Belgium and the Lusitania on their lips and in their hearts. Their resources were modest but their hearts were valiant. Thereby they added fresh glory to the Italian renown. They served humanity. They were an example to other nations. They did right, and with a nation as with an individual, that, in the end, is the only thing which matters."

Therefore, when the Hon. Ruffini, pointing to the intervention of America, evokes the prophetic figure of Mazzini, our minds are called to the realisation of something that another Italian genius of the eighteenth century, Giambattista Vico, the founder of the philosophy of history called "ricorsi storici," that is, the systematic recurrence in the world's history of problems which humanity is periodically called to face and solve.

But such recurrences, for those who have been given something of the Great Law, are not only "providential," in the large sense of ideal conception, but are arranged in time and applied by

intelligent Powers, charged with the direct and specific responsibility of the affairs of the world and of men.

And now we see also the fact that Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, the highest representatives of two "historical" aspects of America's mighty soul, have in ominous concord proclaimed the right of America to intervention in the war, and asserted, in its greatest efficiency, the use of such a right, in the very terms in which sixty years ago Mazzini addressed not only the peoples of the world in general, but the American nation regarding its particular karmic opportunity.

And this is the meaning of this great war. Ideals are being reborn in the souls of men. And if the suffering be great, so much the greater shall be the ideals that shall be reborn; and those same ideals are the heralds of a new day, while those men in whose souls they are born are the living sources of history.

The following extracts are translated from a discourse given by the Hon. Ruffini, July 22, 1917, on the occasion of the inauguration of a monument at Turin, Italy, in commemoration of Mazzini:

"What other figure indeed (speaking of Mazzini) has had a past so luminously, so intensely, so highly representative of those ideals for whose salvation all the democracies of the world—whether realistic or republican, it matters not—have descended, one after the other, into this mortal struggle, goaded on by a common human destiny superior to every private interest? Is it not indeed for the ideals of Mazzini that the

soldiers of the Allies are fighting and dying on the battlefields of to-day?"

"This war in which humanity has been plunged for the past three years in undreamed-of horror, is not one of arms alone, it is a war of ideas.

"Who is indeed that cold theorist of historic materialism, who is that partisan blinded with such fanaticism who can feel himself unable to recognise in it other than the fruit of a satanic conspiracy of camarilla and of caste, of an intense competition for the markets of the world,—a sort of tragical farce, so to speak, in which the principal actors are engaged in a sort of gunshot contest to gain commercial patronage.

"Yet the truth is that in these three years which count for centuries, the war has been elevating, purifying, spiritualising. It is no longer a struggle alone of interests, ambition and hate, but rather a deadlock between two opposed conceptions of life, of two moral worlds which cannot be reconciled, a true spiritual conflagration which is being fought not only in every continent and in every sea, but even in the depth of every human consciousness, deriving thus its universal character and perhaps for this, its unparalleled fury.

"Who, then, better than Mazzini has foreseen the fatal grouping together of these two antagonistic camps,—on the one hand all the democracies of the world, on the other all the powers of absolutism,—when even in his day, he opposed the pretended Sacred Alliance of the Central Powers by means of the truly sacred alliance of the people? Or who, better than he, foresaw the inevitable conflict, when he gave warning: 'Italy and Europe are marching slowly, but as surely as the

justice of God, to the supreme crisis, to the inevitable struggle between liberty and despotism'?

"In the centuries to come, this war will be known as the 'War of Nations,' because, among the great principles enunciated, that of nationality holds the chief place. Now in what tongue before ours, through the merits of Mazzini, and with a more ardent faith, with a fervor almost religious, has been proclaimed the necessity, the sacredness, the inviolability of nations, from the greatest to the smallest?

"Nor certainly could the fatal folly of pan-Germanism be scourged with more fiery condemnation than by him when he said: 'I abhor that nation usurping, and obsessed by monopoly, which sees vaguely its own greatness and strength only in the weakness and poverty of others.'

"The substantial program of the Intesa: Defend all the fatherlands in order that humanity may be safe and secure,—could not be defined more clearly than by him when proclaiming a thousand times in a thousand ways: 'The fatherlands are the work-shops of humanity.' 'The fatherlands and humanity are inseparable; the one leads to the other.' 'Without the constitution of the fatherland—of a free nation—no international society can produce great results.' 'The organisation of labor requires the division of labor, and the nations make possible the division of labor of humanity.'

"Nor could words more exalted or more pregnant with meaning be heard than these: 'I adore my fatherland because I adore the principle of fatherlands; our liberty, because I believe in liberty; our rights, because I believe in rights for all.'

"But there is still another point in which the mind of Mazzini, viewed in the light of present facts, shines with a splendor even more dazzling. And that is when he assigns to nations a rigid altruistic duty; when he attributes to them a moral duty, a debt of consciousness, no less rigorous or inviolable than that assigned to the individual. Twofold is the duty of every nation. He taught to organise and struggle for your own unity and independence, and then for the unity and independence of all other nations. This is a moral duty, a debt of consciousness of which no nation can fall short without denying its own right of existence—without, he vehemently declared, committing suicide.

"Hence his horror at the doctrine of non-intervention, for that system of neutrality when a war of liberty and of nationality is being fought in the world. Hence his fiery reproach to England in 1859: 'And you nations, strong and free, who declare yourselves believing in truth and justice, you say: "Between good and bad we will remain neutral, impassive spectators." These are the words of Cain; and a people who chooses to teach such, is not worthy to be called Christian: it is virtually a people of political atheists.'

"And so also, a few years later, his eloquent appeal to the citizens of North America: 'In the great battle which is being fought in all the earth, between good and bad, between justice and authority, between equality and privilege, between duty and selfishness, between truth and falsehood, between God and idols, your place is assigned: you must know that to draw yourselves apart would be a crime; that when the messenger of

God calls you, indifference would be atheism.'

"The future historian not only will describe the developments and will note the effects of this conflict, but he will search into the past for the prophetic signs and the determining factors of it. Must he not, then, in praising that sublime attitude which has ennobled this war, the act of that most generous nation beyond the seas (America), which, against every material interest, moved only by reasons of ideality, has unitedly thrown its strong sword on the side of the oppressed,—must he not then indeed, in praising such an act, assign a post and a most prominent one, to this our purest apostolic character, Mazzini?

"Still more, the historian of the future will say that the materialistic and skeptical conception of the most formidable intellect that Germany has produced in the present time, Marx, assigning to human progress as motor power only economical factors as means of combat, has not exhausted the entire truth,—that there is indeed a higher truth in the generous touch of this heroic heart of an Italian, who believed in the omnipotence of ideal worth, adding to human progress an incorruptible power,—fraternity and solidarity.

"In that day of the future the ascetic figure of our hero may truly repeat to the people that faith of his which the poet of the third epoch of Italy, G. Carducci, summed up in these sublime words:

"Tu solo, o ideal, sei vero!"

(Thou alone, O Ideal, art true!"

*Luigi and Lucinda Alfieri.*

### PURIFYING THE PERSONALITY

In the Ancient Mysteries of Egypt and of Greece great multitudes of men and women were admitted to a participation in the sacred rites and ceremonies and initiations. These Mysteries were not secret societies in the sense that we understand the secret societies of to-day; they were rather to be regarded as state religions, for they were under the official sanction and protection of the state. In the Eleusinian Mysteries of Greece these initiations took place annually, and the festivities and activities connected therewith occupied a number of days. This time was regarded as the great religious festival of the year. It was very much as if Easter and Christmas and other Christian holidays were collected into a single week.

Whatever the details of the ceremonies were may perhaps never be fully known, but from such fragments of knowledge as have come down to modern times the student of soul wisdom may easily recognise that the ceremonies illustrated the various great changes that take place in the evolution of the ego, or permanent human individuality. The public ceremonies probably symbolised the great universal cycle of birth, death and rebirth, while the specific initiations into the various degrees may most likely have had to do in symbols with the unfoldment of higher stages of consciousness and with clear and definite teachings about the higher or invisible realms of nature.

The earlier part of the festival, perhaps several days, was called the *catharsis*, and was devoted to the preparation of those who wished to take

part in the inner mysteries, that is, those who were to be initiated. This preparation consisted chiefly of bathing, cleansing the physical body, of fasting and perhaps of quiet reflection or meditation. After this period came the ceremonial procession of the multitude from Athens to the temple of Eleusis, where the final mysteries were celebrated, some during the night.

All this was and is a clear illustration of the great law of human spiritual evolution, which requires a certain preparation and purification of the personality before this personality can understand the higher, spiritual truths and can share consciously in the life of its higher self, the ego or immortal man. The great law of spiritual evolution is progress, expansion of consciousness into higher realms; and all this requires a certain amount of harmonising of the lower bodies with the higher life. It should be clearly understood that man can only pass from one stage of life to a higher one by a continuous process and this requires that there shall be nothing in the life of the lower bodies,—no thoughts, feelings or actions,—which would be contradictory to the higher consciousness, or activities in the causal body of the ego.

If the personality is to have a conscious share in the spiritual life, it means that the lower bodies,—the physical, astral and mental,—must respond to vibrations which are very delicate and belong naturally rather to the ego in his causal body than to the personality. If there is much coarse, heavy matter in these lower bodies, and if the man has been in the habit of living strongly in this material, selfish part of his nature, then any

spiritual energy coming from the higher man into his lower bodies of the personality would merely heighten the animal passions and other undesirable selfish or material tendencies of thought and action. What is necessary for safe and sane progress in spiritual life is that the man should make his lower bodies as nearly as possible true representatives in the lower realms of nature of his real being, higher self or ego. This will make it more easily possible for him to still the lower activities and concentrate his energies of thought and feeling upon spiritual things and thereby to enter into at least a partial realisation of the higher, spiritual life.

It is in the nature of the scheme upon which our universe is built, that the personal man can not earn directly the riches of the spiritual life. Neither can they be given outright to a man. They are not subject to bargaining and exchange, but are the possession of all true souls already, as a birth-right. What the man must do to enter into the higher life should not so much be to try to force the higher life to express itself in and through his as yet unperfected lower bodies, as to harmonise those lower bodies of his personality with the life of the spiritual worlds. When this has been accomplished to a sufficient extent, the man will begin to experience something of what the spiritual life really is. It will illuminate his lower mind with understanding and perception of truths; it will uphold him in the steady feeling that the trending of all things is toward perfection, that all lives are but partial expressions of One Great Life; and it will enable him to receive and use the higher energies of

will, so that he may labor and strive ceaselessly to help perfect the conditions of life in the lower world, without utter exhaustion or despair.

In outward seeming the purification of the personality is a negative action or process. But in reality it is probably also very strongly positive. The negative side of life has to do more with material nature, while the positive side is the expression of the invisible realities of higher, spiritual energies,—the very life of the spirit. It is not so much the personal man who decides upon purifying his bodies, as it is the ego himself who has gained sufficient control over the personality to cause it to act according to his higher will. And this will of the ego is a most positive reality; it is one of the highest expressions of the Supreme Life in a human organism.

It is a beautiful thought that we may persevere in the work of purifying our lower bodies throughout the long years of the life of the personality, even without necessarily having the conscious realisation of full reward or results achieved. Such efforts are never really futile: they may not bear their full fruits in one earth-life, but they will inevitably lead to the great and wonderful achievement of the union of the lower life to the higher life of the ego, or rather the doing away with the illusory sense of separate life of the personality. Let us, therefore, never try to escape from the steady pressure of will to purify our personality which we as egos have once applied, in an auspicious moment of premature recognition of higher spiritual truth. We can very easily make this steady pressure a fixed habit.

C. S.

### OBJECTIONS TO REINCARNATION

Many people easily convince themselves that reincarnation is not a fact. They do so because they do not want to believe it; because there is an instinctive dread of living again on earth. To live in higher realms, in beatified celestial spheres, is much more attractive to them.

A very convenient way of persuading one's self that reincarnation is false is to pick up some old-fashioned books and get a few ideas about the subject, some few statements made by writers of different schools of thought, and in overthrowing and refuting such statements take it for granted that the whole theory is disproved.

In an article which appeared some few months ago in *The Progressive Thinker*, a spiritualistic paper published weekly in Chicago, the writer, Grace Pearl Bronaugh, writes in a sincere way:

I remember well with what horror and dismay I first heard the theory of Reincarnation explained. I had looked upon it as a mere dream of fantastic minds, the poet's fancy, the child's fairy-tale. In my ignorance I supposed that no one except the heathen could take it seriously. I had but recently outgrown the belief in everlasting punishment for the wicked after death, and when the idea of Reincarnation presented itself to me as a serious problem, I felt that hell still existed. I could not disprove it; I suffered torturing doubts and fears, yet something like instinct came to my relief. I knew that in my soul I did not believe it.

She said to a friend who believed in reincarnation, "I abhor the idea; I cannot accept it." On being told that reincarnation enables the soul to progress, she replied that it is all right for the mistaken to begin over again,

but the undeveloped should continue in the same direction. The child at school who writes a lesson wrong may be made to erase it and do it over, but if at the end of the term he shows himself capable of progress he is not put back in the same grade.

This is evidently a misconception of the workings of reincarnation. We understand precisely that undeveloped egos continue their evolution from stage to stage in the course of their lives on earth, and that they do not have to learn again those lessons which they have already mastered.

The writer goes on to say that believing with Horatio W. Dresser that the world knows a whole lot about reincarnation which isn't true, she determined of possible to find what is true. She read such books as were calculated to prove the theory.

I even purchased a few choice books to study at my leisure, among which were such treasures as *The Bhagavad-Gita*, *The Spirit of the Upanishads*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path*, *Light of Asia*, and *Laotze*. I was especially impressed by *The Light of Egypt*, by Thomas Burgoyn, who declared that the theory of Reincarnation is the most gigantic delusion ever imposed upon humanity. He attributes it to the Inversive Magi, who have so inverted it, or at least perverted it, as to make it almost unrecognisable. Evidently there is some truth in the theory, but what is it?

She read especially carefully *The Perfect Way*, by Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, and *The Soul in Human Embodiments*, (in the work *Psychosophy*), by Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond. The latter teaches that "The spirit of each embodiment expresses a personality but not a complete entity, the entity being the soul." "There is no reincarnation. There is another expression, and another, until all that is possible is expressed here and in spirit life."

From *The Perfect Way* the writer quotes:

"That part of man which passes through or transmigrates is the anima divina, which is the immediate receptacle of the deific Spirit. The anima bruta or earthly mind is that part of man which retains all earthly and local memories, reminiscent affections, cares and personalities of the world or planetary spheres, and bears his family or earth name. After death the anima bruta or Ruach (breath or spirit) remains in the 'lower Eden' within sight and call of the magnetic earth-sphere. But the anima divina or Neshamah, the name of which is known only to God, passes upwards and continues its evolution, bearing with it only a small portion, and that the purest, of its outer soul or mind. This anima divina is the true man. It is not within hail of the magnetic atmosphere, and only on the rarest and most solemn occasions does it return to the planet unclothed. The astral shade, the Nephesh, is dumb; the earthly soul or anima bruta, speaks and remembers; the divine soul, or Neshamah, which contains the divine light, neither returns nor communicates that is, in the ordinary way." And now please note this particularly: "That which the anima bruta remembers is the history of one incarnation only, because it is part of the astral man, and the astral man is renewed at *every incarnation* of the *Neshamah*. But very advanced men become reincarnate, not on this planet but on some other nearer the Sun. The anima bruta has lived *but once and will never be reincarnate*. It continues in the lower Eden, a personality in relation to the earth, and retaining the memories, both good and bad, of one past life. If it have done evil it suffers indeed but is not condemned; if it have done well it is happy, but not beatified. It continues in thought its favorite pursuits of earth and creates for itself houses, gardens, flowers, books and so forth, out of the astral light. It remains in this condition more or less strongly defined, according to the personality it has acquired, until the anima divina, one of whose temples it was, has accomplished all its Avatars. . . . Such memories as a man, on the upward path, can have of past incarnations are by reflection only and the memories are not of events usually, but of principles

and truths and habits formerly acquired. The anima bruta seems to itself to progress, because it has a vague sense that sooner or later it will be lifted to higher spheres. It is right when it says it is immortal, for the better part of it will in the end be absorbed into the Neshamah. If a man would meet and recognise his beloved in Nirvana he must make his affections one of the Neshamah and not of the Ruach. True love is stronger than a thousand deaths. Now all these three, Nephesh, Ruach and Neshamah, are discrete modes of one and the same universal Being. Wherefore there inheres in them all a divine potency. Now both of the Nephesh and the Ruach, that which is gathered up and endures is Neshamah."

Then she makes the following interesting confession as to her own feelings and views:

I was impressed with the idea that both of these books come very near the truth, only presenting it from different standpoints. Yet I could not quite accept the idea of Mrs. Kingsford that all these various expressions from the same soul will eventually become one. . . In some respects I feel that I am in harmony with it (*anima divina*) and can comprehend its nature, yet in others I feel my inferiority. The aspirations of the anima bruta toward an Eden of homes and gardens, flowers and books, appeals to me so strongly that I imagine I will stop there instead of going on immediately to the upper Heaven, about which I know nothing except that it must be the abode of all Wisdom, and the solution of all problems. I am attracted toward it in my intellectual moods, when I am impatient to know things past finding out. But my heart's desire seems to aspire no farther than to the world beyond this, where there are homes and books and friends and the dear ones I have known.

Her friend, who believes in reincarnation, thinks it is the world of All Wisdom. If so, it must also be the world of All Love. But I can not imagine anything which I would love more, or want to learn about any more intensely, than just such a world as Mrs. Kingsford describes as being the world pertaining to the Ruach,

or earthly soul. It must be a lovely world, probably a world of love. And if not the world of the highest wisdom, could I understand the highest wisdom even if it were? Judging from my present muddled condition, not.

It is quite evident that what troubles the writer is the inability to analyse herself, a complex being, into the different elements or phases of life, as is done according to the Hebrew classification in the quotation from *The Perfect Way*. She persists in maintaining her unity of being, and identifies herself by preference with the astral or emotional nature rather than with that phase of her own being which is the expression of the ego, or Neshamah. That part of her personality which delights in the beautiful life of the astral world with its flowers and gardens, is not permanent. Yet it is not wholly separate from the ego. For the ego lives in the lower phases of life and gives to them the persistent feelings of immortality, which are applied by the lower personality or Ruach, to itself.

Our modern presentation of the ancient wisdom philosophy of reincarnation holds that the personality does not reincarnate (this is probably what Mrs. Richmond has in mind when she denies reincarnation); that the ego does reincarnate. It may also be understood that the ego expresses himself only partially in any one personality, and that the sum of his expressions in earth lives only partly constitutes himself. It must be emphasised that the ego is himself an evolving living being. Each earth life completed means a return of the higher part of man, that part of the ego which entered the lower bodies, to his true being, the free ego. By these continued outputtings and

withdrawings of himself, into and from the successive personalities, the ego grows continually and finally becomes more than the sum of his earthly expressions, for he finally transcends even the limits of his life as ego. It is this final change which is called in Buddhist literature the entering into Nirvana.

The writer concludes her account of her study of reincarnation with these words:

Enough for me, and Mrs. Richmond and Mrs. Kingsford have both confirmed my belief that Reincarnation is not a fact. All expression is from a source beyond the individual soul; the individual soul has never expressed before, will never express again. If it is indeed a part of the Divine Soul and is to become one with it eventually, it must be one in consciousness and not in form or personality. The individual will remain the individual forever. Of that I am sure. I am anxious to progress, I desire to be active, but I am very tired of the present environment and would not be active in precisely the same way. I can understand that every new expression is natural and desirable, but to be swept back again to learn the lesson anew under the same limitations, even though less unfavorable, would be a form of torture to the aspiring soul not much better than the old orthodox hell.

The mistake made here is that the writer regards the state of the "anima bruta" as quite separate from that of the "anima divina." As a matter of fact she is both at one and the same time. The changes in consciousness that take place after death are precisely such as to disentangle the "anima divina" from the "anima bruta." It is not untrue to say that neither the "anima bruta" nor the "anima divina" reincarnate. It is the ego who incarnates, or sends down a part of himself into a personality. And as he

does so time and again, this process may be and is correctly called re-incarnation.

The difficulty is that many people are unable to recognise or realise that they are mere parts or expressions of higher beings, the egos. When we try to solve the mysteries of life and death and immortality from the standpoint of the personality alone, we are sure to remain muddled and come to no true result.

There is of course no blame to be attached to those who are not able to understand the process of reincarnation; only those who do not understand should be careful in their conclusions.

C. S.

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"How glorious the light that would be cast on the present order of things on earth by a knowledge of our former existences! And yet, not only is our memory helpless regarding the times that preceded birth, it is not even conscious of the whole of the intervening period, often playing us false in the course of a lifetime. It retains absolutely nothing of the period immediately preceding birth, and scarcely any trace of our education as children; we might even be altogether ignorant of the fact that we were children once, were there not around us witnesses of that time. On every hand we are wrapped in a veil of ignorance, as with a pall of darkness, we no more distinguish the light beyond the cradle than that beyond the tomb. So far as memory is concerned, it would seem that we might be compared with a rocket such as we sometimes see flashing through the sky in the night-time, leaving behind it a line of light,—this light never shows anything more than a limited portion of the way. Of like nature is memory,—a trail of light left behind on our journey; we die, and everything is dark around us; we are born again, and the light begins to appear, like a star through the mist; we live, and it develops and grows, suddenly disappears again and

reappears once more; from one eclipse to another we continue our way, and this way, interrupted by periods of darkness, is a continuous one, whose elements, only apparently separated, are linked to each other by the closest of bonds; we always bear within ourselves the principle of what we shall be later on, we are always rising higher. Question us on our past, and, like the rocket, we reply that we are going forward, but that our path is illumined only in our immediate neighborhood, and that the rest of the road is lost in the blackness of night; we no more know from where we came than we know our destination, but we do know that we came from below and are rising higher, and that is all that is necessary to interest us in ourselves and make us conscious of what we are. And who knows but what our soul, in the unknown secret of its essence, has power some day to throw light on its successive journeyings, like those streaks of flame to which we are comparing it? There are strong reasons for thinking that such is the case, since the entire restoration of memory appears, with good reason, to be one of the main conditions of our future happiness. . . .

"In like manner the soul, passing from one abode to another, and leaving its first body for a new one, ever changing its appearance and its dwelling, guided by the Creator's beams, from transmigration to transmigration, from metamorphosis to metamorphosis, pursues the palinogenetic course of its eternal destiny. . . .

" . . . Let us, then, add the teachings of metempsychosis to those of the Gospel, and place Pythagoras by the side of Jesus. . . ."

*Jean Reynaud, in "Terre et Ciel."*

"Apart from the belief in previous lives, nothing can be explained, neither the coming of a new soul into this evil world, the often incurable bodily infirmities, the disproportionate division of wealth, nor the inequality in intelligence and morality. The justice of God lies behind the monstrous phantom of chance. We understand neither what man is, whence he comes, nor whither he goes; original sin does not account for the particular fate of individuals, as it is the same for all. Roughly

peaking it clears up no difficulties, but rather adds to them the most revolting injustice. Once accept the theory of pre-existence, and a glorious light is thrown on the dogma of sin, for it becomes the result of personal faults from which the guilty soul must be purified.

"Pre-existence, once admitted as regards the past, logically implies a succession of future existences for all souls that have not yet attained to the goal and that have imperfections and defilements from which to be cleansed. In order to enter *the circle of happiness* and leave *the circle of wanderings*, one must be pure.

"We have opposed error, and proclaimed truth, and we firmly believe that the dogmas of pre-existence and the plurality of lives are true."

*André Pezzani, in "The Plurality of the Soul's Lives."*

"Heresies perish not with their authors, but, like the river Arethusa, though they lose their currents in one place, they rise up again in another . . . revolution of time will restore it, when it will flourish till it be condemned again. For as though there were a Metempsychosis, and the soul of one man passed into another, opinions do find, after certain Revolutions, men and minds like those that first begat them. . . Each man is not only himself, there hath been many Diogenes and as many Timons, though but few of that name; men are lived over again, the world is now as it was in ages past; there was none then but there hath been someone since that parallels him, and is, as it were, his revived self."

*Thomas Browne, in "Religio Medici."*

"Where is there an old man who would not like to feel certain that he would be born again and bring back into another life the experience he has gained in the present one? To affirm that this desire cannot be realised is to confess that God is capable of deceiving us. We must, therefore, recognise that we have already lived before being what we now are, and that many another life awaits us, some in this world, and the rest in a higher sphere, with a finer body and more delicate senses."

*Fourier, in "Théorie de l'Unité Universelle."*

### FIELD NOTES

A *Legion* Group of eight members has been formed in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, by Mr. Robert Davidson. Ten subscriptions and an order for distribution literature and a large quantity of adhesive seals was sent with the application for a Charter. This is the first Group in Australia and it is to be hoped that the work in that great continent will prosper.

Illustrated lectures have been given regularly on Sunday evenings at eight o'clock, in Room 706, Fine Arts Building in Chicago. Recent lectures have been devoted to the study of the building, by the present man, of the greater man of the future. Problems of soul growth and the right development of thought power are considered. The audiences are very much interested and many are reading the distribution literature and other books.

Mrs. Yorks, a Chicago member, gave two lectures on Christmas Eve, with slides and music, interpreting the deeper truths symbolised in the opera, *Parsifal*.

Members wishing to place this magazine in public libraries may send in subscriptions for 1918 at the rate of twenty-five cents each.

Friends of the *Legion* work will do well to order a full set of Distribution Literature, thirty official leaflets, and one hundred adhesive seals,—all for fifty cents.

*Help spread the knowledge of the great laws of life!*

